

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MEXICO 08200 011823Z

51

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCI-06 L-03 AID-20 IGA-02 OMB-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15

PRS-01 SPC-03 TRSE-00 H-03 INT-08 SS-20 EB-11 AGR-20

DRC-01 /150 W

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R 311742Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8658

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 8200

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR/MX

SUBJECT: SALINITY: MEXICALI VALLEY REHABILITATION

REF: STATE 207988

1. FOR SOME TIME PRIOR TO CONCLUSION OF NEGOTIATIONS WHICH RESULTED IN MINUTE 242, GOM HAD BEEN AT WORK ON A MAJOR REHABILITATION SCHEME WITHIN MEXICALI VALLEY. PROJECT, VISITED BY AMBASSADOR BROWNELL, INCLUDES CONSTRUCTION OF NEW, LINED FEEDER CANALS, DRAINAGE DITCHES AND OTHER IRRIGATION WORKS, AS WELL AS TAKING SOME MARGINAL LANDS OUT OF CULTIVATION AND SUBSTITUTING THEREFOR OTHER AREAS, SOME OF WHICH HAVE TO BE LEVELED AND OTHERWISE PREPARED (THIS IS NOT ON A ONE-FOR-ONE BASIS). SINCE THIS PROGRAM WAS PLANNED AND IS BEING EXECUTED INDEPENDENT OF SETTLEMENT FORESEEN IN MINUTE 242, EMBASSY HAS ASSUMED THAT FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS REFERRED TO IN POINT 7 OF THAT MINUTE WERE NOT APPLICABLE TO THIS PROJECT. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT FINANCING REFERRED TO IN MEXICO'S 7635 RELATES TO THIS EXISTING REHABILITATION PROGRAM.

2. NO OFFICIAL COMMENT HAS COME TO OUR ATTENTION WHICH
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PAGE 02 MEXICO 08200 011823Z

WOULD INDICATE THAT GOM HAS TACKLED POST-SETTLEMENT

QUESTION OF MEXICALI VALLEY REHABILITATION. IN MEDIA TREATMENT OF SUBJECT, THERE HAS BEEN SOME GROUNDING ABOUT FACT THAT MINUTE 242 DID NOT PROVIDE FOR INDEMNIFICATION. LIKEWISE, THERE WAS AT LEAST PASSING NOTE OF PROVISIONS OF POINT 7, BUT NO SPECULATION ABOUT IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ASPECT NOR SUGGESTIONS ABOUT SPECIFIC PROJECTS TO BE UNDERTAKEN.

3. NOTWITHSTANDING THE FOREGOING, WE BELIEVE THAT SOME PLANNING PROBABLY IS GOING FORWARD. RECALLING SECRETARY RABASA'S STATEMENT THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO BE EMBARRASSED, AS HAD HAPPENED ON OCCASION IN THE PAST, BY PRESENTATION OF ILL-PREPARED PLANS, IT IS LIKELY THAT PROJECT STUDIES ARE BEING PREPARED TO CONFORM WITH WELL-UNDERSTOOD STANDARDS ESTABLISHED BY IFI'S. IF THIS ASSUMPTION IS CORRECT, PRELIMINARY WORK UNDOUBTEDLY WILL BE DONE WITHIN SECRETARIAT OF HYDRAULIC RESOURCES. WITHIN LIMITATIONS INHERENT IN THEIR RESPECTIVE POSITIONS, WE EXPECT THAT AMBASSADOR DE OLLOQUI AND LUIS CABRERA LIKELY ARE "HARD LINERS" PRESSING FOR SIGNIFICANT PROGRAMS, WHILE FOR REASONS POINTED OUT IN REFTEL, ROVIROSA MIGHT DOWNPLAY US-ASSISTED REHABILITATION.

4. REASONING IN PREVIOUS PARAGRAPH ADMITTEDLY IS SPECULATIVE. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT EITHER WHEN PROPOSALS MIGHT BE PRESENTED FOR USG CONSIDERATION OR HOW COSTLY AND EXTENSIVE GOM PROJECTS MIGHT BE. THIS LEAVES US IN SOMETHING OF A DILEMMA: AS POINTED OUT IN REFTEL, APPROACH TO GOM ON THIS SUBJECT CAN ONLY SERVE TO STIMULATE ACTIVITY AND GIVE IMPRESSION THAT USG IS WILLING TO TAKE INITIATIVE; CONTRARILY, IN ABSENCE OF ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING GOM INTENTIONS, WE ARE IN POOR POSITION TO ADVISE THE CONGRESS ABOUT THE ULTIMATE PRICE TAG FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF SALINITY AGREEMENT. IF AND AS ACTION ON POINT 7 OF MINUTE 242 BECOMES A MAJOR FACTOR IN HANDLING US LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE PERTINENT TO SALINITY AGREEMENT, INQUIRY EITHER THROUGH IBWC OR DIRECTLY TO SECRETARY OF HYDRAULIC RESOURCES MIGHT BE MOST INNOCUOUS APPROACH FOR SMOOTHER MEXICAN INTENTIONS.

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PAGE 03 MEXICO 08200 011823Z

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SALINITY, SOIL POLLUTION CONTROLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973MEXICO08200
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS DEAN
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: MEXICO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t1973102/aaaaablc.tel
Line Count: 107
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 207988
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23-Jan-2002 by willialc>; APPROVED <13 FEB 2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SALINITY: MEXICALI VALLEY REHABILITATION
TAGS: PBOR, MX
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005